

Contesting Identity: Politics of gays and lesbians in Toronto in the 1970s

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ABSTRACT *This article explores a particular moment in the history of Toronto's gay movement politics when the movements' ideological perspectives on the nature of gay and lesbian identities and associated spaces shifted dramatically from the so-called liberationist stance of the mid-1970s to the so-called ethnic minority approach of the late 1970s. This occurred within the context of a particular series of events that prompted gay activists to rework their conceptualization of gay and lesbian identity in order to be recognized as legitimate participants in certain pivotal, public proceedings. Far from being a well-thought-out and deliberate shift in political strategy, the 'minority' argument was, in many ways, a reflexive and unexamined response to unanticipated circumstances. Toronto's gay activists, in representing gays and lesbians as a minority fundamentally altered meanings associated with both gay and lesbian identities and with the spaces dominated or controlled by gay and lesbian interests.*

Introduction: gays and minorities

In March 1979, the mainstream and gay media in Toronto was in an uproar over the publication of two articles in the Metropolitan Toronto Police Association magazine, *News and Views*. In the first article, entitled 'The homosexual fad', Staff Sergeant Tom Moclair, a 24-year veteran of the Police Force, called homosexuals 'weirdos', 'fruits' and 'fags' and warned that by allowing homosexuality to exist, Canadian society might as well 'condone murder, assault and rape'. A companion article written by retired police officer Ken Peglar complained, among other things, that blacks think of little but their 'blackness' and Jews, their 'Jewishness'¹.

For gay activists, these articles appeared at a time when relations between the Metropolitan Toronto Police Force and the local gay and lesbian population were at an all-time low (Kinsman 1996; Warner 2002)². A recent string of sensationalized events had trained unwelcome public attention on the local homosexual population; one that had been growing in public visibility since the late 1960s³. In January 1978 Toronto's Morality Squad laid charges against the gay publication, *Body Politic*, for printing an article allegedly advocating sexual

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relations between men and very young boys. In March of the same year, after a disturbingly graphic trial, four men with a distant association with a local gay organization were convicted of the sexual assault and murder of a 12-year-old boy, increasing police surveillance of gay and lesbian spaces. In December 1978 the Police raided the Barracks Bathhouse, a club catering to men interested in S & M encounters, and publicly displayed seized sexual paraphernalia, keeping the mainstream press a-buzz for weeks. Gay activists portrayed these police activities as evidence of a deliberate and sustained assault by Toronto's police force against the increasingly visible and vocal gay and lesbian communities. For activists, the *News and Views* article simply added credence to their claims that police attacks against gay establishments and individual gays and lesbians stemmed from the constabulary's discriminatory and prejudiced attitudes.

For their part, Toronto's ethnic minority community leaders protested the racist commentary in the Peglar article and either ignored or remained silent on the anti-homosexual comments in the Moclair article⁴. In the ensuing proceedings gay activists and ethnic minority leaders appeared at the same public meetings, pressing politicians and police brass for a public inquiry into alleged police misconduct against so-called minority groups. Determining who could legitimately be identified as collectively constituting a 'minority' group became a pivotal question as events unfolded and had serious consequences for the gay movement's representations of gay and lesbian identities and spaces.

This article explores a key moment in the history of gay politics in Toronto when the dominant ideological stance on the nature of gay and lesbian identities and spaces underwent a major transformation, in part because of the movement's engagement in mainstream debates over the publication of the *News and Views* articles. The *News and Views* proceedings mark an important and highly visible occasion when the publicly contested constitution of the nature of the identities of those engaged in same-sex contact and space become clearly visible. The central argument is that as gays and lesbians, ethnic minority groups and mainstream interests formulated and deployed their responses to the discriminatory slurs in the *News and Views* articles, the ensuing discursive intersections fashioned alternative definitions and understandings of so-called minority identities and communities. As a result, gay activists in Toronto found themselves representing themselves and their spaces in ways that were innovative and untested and in a manner that added momentum to their already transforming political agenda. Of interest here, is not those private or individual conceptualizations of same-sex identity that might have surfaced during these proceedings but those publicly deployed and politically strategic representations put into circulation as part of the discursive exchanges containing alternative and contested representations of homosexual identities and spaces.

The *News and Views* articles received considerable mainstream and gay media attention, both locally and nationally. The nationally distributed *Globe and Mail* (*Globe*), the *Toronto Star* (*Star*) and the *Toronto Sun* (*Sun*) and gay publications, including the prominent magazine the *Body Politic* (*BP*), constitute a publicly visible record of how dominant discursive constitutions of homosexual identity and space were deployed. Taken together with reports on the proceedings of the City of Toronto, the Metropolitan Toronto Council and the Police Commission, these accounts provide a rich and substantial public record documenting the transformative discursive constructions of gay and lesbian and minority identity and space between March and October 1979. Application of feminist

poststructuralist analytics to these accounts offers an opportunity to examine the complexities of gender and sexual identity transformation. As Susan Ruddick suggests, an analysis of the representations and imagery used by the media about an incident provides an opportunity to see just how certain events 'caught the imagination' of the public and framed the participants and circumstances in specific ways (1996, p. 141; see also Kobayashi & Peake, 1994).

This article is organized into two sections. In the first section, I briefly discuss the approaches used in current geographical literature on connections between gay movement politics, homosexual identities and the development of urban gay districts in North America. In particular, I examine how both lesbian and gay gendered and sexualized identities are constituted within both a political movement and urban spaces whose membership is dominated by gay male interests. I then outline how feminist-based poststructuralist approaches to conceptualizing identities and spaces provide a useful framework for examining the exceedingly dynamic and unstable intersections between various constitutions of homosexual and minority identities and the constitution of spaces associated with those groups in urban areas such as Toronto.

In the second section, I utilize this theoretical perspective to explore the transformations in the ideological perspectives underpinning gay movement politics in Toronto, in part through their participation in the public debates on the *News and Views* publications. Within these transformative processes, gay organizations continuously reworked their public representations of the nature of homosexual identity and the spaces associated with same-sex practices. What becomes clear is that while a central feature of gay movement political discourses during this period was to deploy acceptable representations of homosexual identity designed to garner mainstream acceptance, discursive transformations to that identity often came about in unanticipated and contradictory ways.

Gendering the Gay Ghetto: the politics of sexuality, gender and identity in 1970s gay urban enclaves

The Second World War represents a watershed for most historians and geographers interested in the emergence of modern gay political movements, identities and subcultures in North America (Chauncey, 1994; Kinsman, 1996). In the 1950s and early 1960s, the less desirable locations in the core of a number of mid-sized and larger cities experienced unparalleled growth in the number of residential, institutional and commercial establishments catering to a gay clientele evidenced by the well-publicized gay districts in cities such as San Francisco, New York, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. The assorted collection of bars, bathhouses, restaurants, clothing stores, community centres, sports clubs and professional offices provided gay movements and gay activists with a ready-made, concentrated constituency available for political and social organizing (Weightman, 1980, 1981; Castells & Murphy, 1982; Castells, 1983; Lauria & Knopp, 1985; Knopp, 1987; Bell & Valentine, 1995; Bailey, 1999).

It is hardly disputable that these gay neighbourhoods were, and remain, predominantly white, male and middle-class preserves despite the claim by some contemporary researchers that gay districts are far more diverse now in terms of age, gender, race and ethnicity than in the past (Chauncey, 1994; Bailey, 1999)⁵. This was certainly the case for the emerging gay neighbourhood in the City of Toronto during the 1970s which was largely dominated by gay men, as was

the fledgling gay political movement itself. By the late 1960s, the mainstream media in Toronto reported, with some concern, that certain residential and commercial areas in the downtown core had such a significant gay presence that Toronto could be considered Canada's 'homosexual capital'. Almost all the reporting highlighted the growing visibility of gays and gay spaces and acknowledged that lesbians, while present, were considerably less evident (i.e. *Toronto Star* 31 January 1966; see also Katz, 1964, 1969; Poulton, 1964a, b, c). By the early 1970s, reports in the gay press noted that certain gay business owners actively worked to exclude lesbians from particular gay spaces by imposing an increased cover charge for lesbians, imposing a dress code or requiring lesbians to be accompanied by a male escort (i.e. Hannon, *Body Politic* 1977; Bearchell, *Body Politic* 1981; see also Chenier, 1995; Ross, 1995). Individual gay male spaces and the gay ghetto itself were constituted as gay male preserves almost from the outset.

Gay men and gay male interests also dominated Toronto's early homosexual organizations. The first homosexual political organizations busied themselves with matters of pressing concern to gay men: the perceived entrapment of gay men by the police in various public parks and washrooms, and the shabby, rundown character of the few commercial establishments serving Toronto's gay clientele. Despite attempts by these new political groups to include lesbians in their constitution, gay men and gay men's interests dominated the organizational structure of the gay movement in Toronto for most of the 1970s (Ross, 1995; Kinsman, 1996; Warner, 2002; Nash, 2003).

Nevertheless, acknowledgement that lesbian involvement in gay movement politics in Toronto was minimal did not deter gay movement organizations from offering their political agenda as one representing the political and social aspirations of both lesbians and gay men. For their part, the few separate lesbian organizations in Toronto in existence during the 1970s often chose to present a publicly united front with their gay movement counterparts, notwithstanding serious internal disagreements on a number of issues (Ross, 1995; Kinsman, 1996; Nash, 2003). Mainstream accounts of the gay movement's activities almost invariably presented gay activists as speaking on behalf of both gays and lesbians. The result is the formation and maintenance of a gay district and a gay movement in Toronto publicly associated with both gays and lesbians even though largely white, middle-class and gay interests dominated both. This remains a contentious point in gay movement politics, despite the Canadian movement's ongoing and more recent attempts at promoting diversity and inclusiveness (Ross, 1995; Warner, 2002; Nash, 2003).

Much of the early scholarly work on the emergence of gay urban spaces focuses on the political, economic and social motivations central to their formation (Altman, 1971; Katz, 1976). Geographical research has focused on how gays, as a group, appropriated or occupied marginal urban spaces for self-protection and safety in the post-World War II period and the economic and historical circumstances that encouraged or supported the formation of these concentrations (Weightman, 1980, 1981; Castells & Murphy, 1982; Castells, 1983; Lauria & Knopp, 1985; Knopp, 1987)⁶. In considering the identity of those gays occupying urban spaces and involved in gay politics in the 1960s and 1970s, much of the current academic literature takes the position that contemporary dominant homosexual (and heterosexual) identities are a particular post-World War II construct emerging as a result of the social, political and economic circumstances of the period (Duberman *et al.*, 1990; Bouthillette, 1994; Knopp, 1995; Kinsman, 1996; Warner, 2002).

Yet in considering the emergence and politicization of gay urban districts, much of the geographical literature has a tendency to stabilize or fix this identity in one particular historical moment in a move that often submerges or renders invisible the highly contested and flexible construction of that identity. Put differently, the geographical literature leaves largely unresolved the question of how the multiple and contested meanings about same-sex identities in circulation operated in and through urban spaces in ways that were mutually constitutive and at variance over time (but for exceptions see Moos, 1989; Binnie, 1995; Forest, 1995; Kenny, 2001; Armstrong, 2002). It also leaves out a consideration of how gay movement politics, dominated largely by male interests, succeeded in imposing their constitutions of gay identities on lesbians.

A wealth of interdisciplinary research argues that gay urban concentrations were mainly apolitical spaces until the formation of the gay liberation movement. The North American gay movement is portrayed as transforming gay territories into political spaces through their efforts at consciousness-raising and education. Scholars contend that gay urban enclaves developed in advance of the gay political movement in North America, and that the gay movement was an instrumental force behind the organization of these districts and their occupants in political and social constituencies active predominantly in local politics (Levine, 1979; Castells, 1983; Knopp, 1987; Moos, 1989; Grube, 1997; Bailey, 1999; Armstrong, 2002; Warner, 2002). For example, Castells and Murphy (1982) contend that early gay districts did not constitute a community in the traditional sense of the word but simply provided gays with spaces of relative freedom. Accordingly, there was 'no community but networks. No territory, but places' (Castells & Murphy, 1982, p. 253).

Work in feminist history and geography and gay, lesbian and queer studies does, however, suggest a conceptualization of the complex and recursive relationships between the contested formation of political identities and their embeddedness in simultaneously material and imagined landscapes. This body of work, mainly grounded in feminist poststructuralist analytical frameworks, offers a framework for exploring the possible connections between gay activists' formulations of gay political identity, their utilization of gay-identified districts and the historical, social and political changes in gay movement ideologies and strategies. It offers an opportunity to extend the boundaries of feminist geographical knowledge through an examination of the emergence of both a gendered and sexualized gay ghetto space which simultaneously delimited and constituted particular lesbian and gay identities.

Feminist geographers and others have argued that the social categories of identity that structure social organization and social relations, such as 'gay' or 'black', are neither fixed nor inherent. Those operating within some form of a poststructuralist analytical framework maintain that these identity categories are culturally and historically specific and are more usefully thought of as circulating systems of meaning or 'discourses' that order social relations (Rose, 1993; Valentine, 1993b; Bell *et al.*, 1994; McDowell, 1999). In any particular historical era, for example, any number of competing discourses could be in circulation, although one particular meaning about the nature and characteristic of a subject or an identity comes to dominate within relations of power. Using this approach, researchers work to identify the variously contested and discursively constructed identities in circulation in different historical and cultural periods, and to identify the processes by which these meanings came to prevail (Scott, 1988, 1993; Parr & Rosenfeld, 1996; Prado, 2000).

In this analytical framework, not only are subjects represented as discursively constructed but the meanings given these subjects are 'deeply implicated in the social production of space, in assumptions about the 'natural' and the built environment and in the sets of regulations which influence who should occupy those spaces and who should be excluded' (McDowell, 1999, p. 11). Geographers envision discourses and counter-discourses as embedded in the built environment such that how we physically structure urban spaces plays a symbolic role in ordering, maintaining and organizing social relations as well as in conveying social expectations about behaviours and activities in certain spaces (Keith & Pile, 1993; Cresswell, 1996; McDowell, 1999). Given this conceptualization, neither space nor identity is fixed as each is in constant motion in relation to each other. Further, the discursive constitution of space and identities is hotly contested and acquires new meanings over time as various players, including political movements such as the gay liberation movement, act in ways that invest new meanings into associated spaces (Warner, 1993; Cresswell, 1996; Pile & Keith, 1997; Bailey, 1999).

Applying this interlocking conceptualization of same-sex identity and space to gay movement politics, identities and spaces in Toronto in the 1970s, the emergence of homosexual identities is conceptualized as the outcome or consequence of a contested, discursive struggle over the meanings given to same-sex activities. This suggests that the spaces publicly associated with same-sex activities such as the gay ghetto in Toronto are integral to the political and social processes at work in the constitution of identities and also that these spaces acquire new and alternative meanings over time as part of the discursive struggles over homosexual identity (Bell & Valentine, 1995; Nash, 2003). Given these understandings of identity and space, it remains to examine how gay politics in Toronto conceptualized gay and lesbian identities and gay ghetto spaces within the context of their political agenda.

Gay Movement Politics in Toronto: changing ideological strategies (1969–1980)

The 1960s and early 1970s were a period of tremendous political, social and cultural upheaval in North America. The race riots in the United States, the anti-War demonstrations, the second wave of the women's liberation movement and the gay liberation movement, among other things, heralded the emergence of a politics of identity and social. The changes wrought in Toronto's political and social landscape in the years between 1969 and the early 1980s were part of a much broader series of transformations in North American urban settings (Duberman *et al.*, 1990; Kinsman, 1996; Escoffier, 1998; Armstrong, 2002; Warner, 2002).

Toronto's first gay organizations came into being shortly after the partial decriminalization of homosexual conduct in Canada in August 1969 and, from the outset, struck a political agenda designed to represent gays and lesbians in ways that would bring about a more favourable public attitude toward homosexual visibility and existence. Not surprisingly, considerable variation existed between and among organizations over how to conceptualize gay and lesbian identity and how these would operate in the formation of an organization's political agenda. Indeed, as several organizations with differing political agendas could be in operation at any one time it is difficult, if not impossible, to speak of the gay movement in Toronto in the singular. Nevertheless, as I argue here, in examining the public record for dominant discursive constitution of homosexual identities in any one period, it is possible to identify which representation held sway,

even though alternative constitutions of identities continued in circulation. An analysis of the ideological positions taken by these various organizations demonstrates they had each struggled to convince those engaged in same-sex activities and the mainstream that these individuals should be seen as constituting a certain type of subject (Duberman *et al.*, 1990; Seidman, 1997; Escoffier, 1998; Turner, 2000; Armstrong, 2002). With these varying representations of homosexual identity came various representations of the material spaces associated with same-sex activities.

Such a perspective suggests that homosexual identity formation was a complex and disjointed affair, but to date most historians of the North American gay movement give a straightforward account of the movements' developing ideological perspectives— from the so-called assimilationist politics of the late 1960s to the intervening liberationist perspective in the 970s and finally the 'ethnic minority' politics of the early 1980s (e.g. Duberman *et al.*, 1990; Escoffier, 1998; Warner, 2002). Toronto's gay movement history during the 1970s followed a similar trajectory, but with its own particular ideological nuances.

Toronto's first gay organizations were decidedly assimilationist in their perspective. Both the University of Toronto Homophile Association (UTHA) and the Community Homophile Association of Toronto (CHAT), founded in the early 1970s, argued publicly that homosexuals were essentially the same as heterosexuals but for the modest difference reflected in their choice of sexual partner (Hislop, BackCHAT, 1973; Smith, 1999; Warner, 2002)⁷. Indeed, assimilationists objected to representing same-sex activities as constituting a distinctive identity at all. Given this constitution, or rather, rejection of a distinctive homosexual identity, it follows that the main goal of assimilationist movement politics was the full integration of homosexuals into mainstream society by fostering belief in and acceptance of the inherent similarities between heterosexuals and homosexuals (Kinsman, 1996; Escoffier, 1998; Warner, 2002). This view was often echoed in mainstream reporting by those sympathetic to the homosexual cause. William Johnson, for example, writing for the mainstream publication, *Globe Magazine* in 1965, claimed that 'the closest thing to a homosexual is a heterosexual' while Sidney Katz, writing for *Maclean's* magazine in 1964 article, argued that 'a surprisingly high proportion of homosexuals are indistinguishable from heterosexuals' (p. 11).

In considering the growing number of gay social spaces developing in Toronto's downtown core, assimilationist organizations such as CHAT and UTHA were not only opposed to representing gays as having a distinct identity but regarded existing gay social spaces as locations constituting a deviant and impoverished homosexual identity. Assimilationists objected to homosexuals being spatially segregated in what they regarded as substandard and seedy spaces. Early in 1972, the gay publication the *Body Politic* charged that Toronto's so-called gay ghetto, with its assortment of rundown bars, taverns and restaurants, was a tool by which mainstream society oppressed and marginalized homosexuals and was designed to make 'communication and compassion well nigh impossible' (Newcombe & Pearce, *Body Politic*, 1971, 1, p. 13; see also Forbes *Body Politic*, 1971, 1, p. 17 and Brewster, *Body Politic*, 1972, 4, p. 3). The ultimate goal for assimilationists was the elimination of separate homosexual spaces through the integration of homosexuals into mainstream society. Assimilationist organizations created alternative social spaces to the assortment of existing bars, taverns and restaurants for both gays and lesbians in the belief that such spaces would encourage those

engaged in same-sex activities to reject the supposedly shallow gay ghetto lifestyle and to become more politically active (Kinsman, 1996; Warner, 2002).

Within a year or so of the formation of Toronto's first homophile associations, several more radical and politically aggressive organizations based on a liberationist ideology were organized. Canada's first liberation newspaper, the *Body Politic*, began publication in the winter of 1971, and its articles and editorials provided both gays and the mainstream with one of the most visible and contentious promotions of a liberationist perspective in the country (Kinsman, 1996; McCleod, 1996; Warner, 2002). Liberationists vigorously rejected the assimilationist conceptualization of homosexual identity and argued that the goal of the liberation movement was the release of human sexuality from what they regarded as the bondage of the current sex/gender system with its proscribed sexualized and gendered social roles (Altman, 1971; Weeks, 1985; Seidman, 1997). Liberationists were as opposed to the idea of distinctive 'homosexual' identities, as assimilationists, arguing that such an identity merely reinforced the narrow heterosexual/homosexual binary rather than expanding the possibilities for alternative sexual (and gendered) identities (Seidman, 1993, 1997; Turner, 2000).

One of the liberationists major political strategies was the drive for inclusion of sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination in the province of Ontario's Human Rights legislation and as a strategy this was to have a profound effect on how the movement constituted the identity of those engaged in same-sex activities. As legal scholar Didi Herman (1994) argues, pursuing a human rights agenda required Toronto's liberation organizations to participate in the formal processes of political and legal institutions of the state. These formal processes and institutions imposed their own sets of discursive practices that required activists to employ particular systems of meaning in order to be credible participants and to be understood by those institutions' decision makers (see also Smith, 1999).

The particular structure of the human rights legislation in Canada imposed the need to articulate a certain form of legislative 'subject'. Canadian human rights statutes are structured in such a way as to establish protected categories of inherent characteristics that are thought to be the basis on which people experience discrimination. These characteristics constitute a core aspect of personhood or identity which is thought to be worthy of protection. For individuals to avail themselves of these legislative safeguards, they must demonstrate they possess the characteristics placing them in the protected categories and that the characteristics are ones on which discriminatory practices are based. In this way, individuals must constitute themselves as the 'subjects' these regimes of protection were designed to cover. Given that any number of individuals may have these characteristics, the legislative provisions promoted the perception of these traits as forming a core identity which, taken collectively, formed a legitimate political, cultural and/or social subgroup in society (Herman, 1994; Stychin, 1995; Smith, 1999).

As the movement for human rights progressed, the commitment to the human rights agenda slowly transformed how the liberation movement in Toronto represented homosexual identity. While, on one hand, representing sexual and gendered identity as fluid and alterable, liberationists were also arguing, within a human rights framework, that sexual orientation was an inherent aspect of identity that needed to be protected. This inadvertently repositioned sexual preference as a defining characteristic of the self and stood in contradiction to arguments that presented sexuality as a more fluid and flexible aspect of identity.

This gradually undermined liberationist representations of identity and laid the foundations for the so-called ethnic minority representation of gays and lesbians that came to dominate gay movement politics by the mid-1980s (Kinsman, 1996; Seidman, 1997).

Interestingly, the liberationist movements' relationship to Toronto's growing gay social spaces was initially as awkward and as negative as that of the assimilationists. While these spaces were the point of contact between the movement and the people they sought to represent, liberationists also took a decidedly dim view of these spaces, arguing that these existing social networks constituted negative and oppressive spaces. In a 1971 article published in the *Georgia Strait* and reprinted in the *Body Politic*, for example, Vancouver's John Forbes blamed the urban bar scene for the apparent inability of gay men to form meaningful or close personal relationships arguing that the gay ghetto constituted an unacceptable mix of 'gossip and sexual rip-offs' (*Body Politic*, 1971, p. 17). Further, Forbes charged, in frequenting these space, homosexuals were complicit in their own marginalization as they helped bar owners, most of whom were heterosexual, to make a profit from an essentially captive clientele. The solution according to liberationists during this period was to forego the clubs and bars in favour of the spaces being created by homosexual political organizations—community and drop-in centres, coffee houses, the dances and fund-raising events (*BackCHAT*, 1973, 3(2), p. 1 and 3(1), p. 1; *Body Politic*, 1972, 2, p. 10 and 1974, 2, p. 2).

By the mid-1970s, Toronto's gay district was an increasingly visible and popular spot for gays to live and socialize and a growing number of commercial establishments catering to gays and lesbians were owned and operated by gay businessmen. This did not change liberationist or assimilationist attitudes towards what they regarded as the segregated and marginal nature of gay social spaces. Liberationists continued to insist that gay ghetto spaces, regardless of ownership or control, were apolitical locations that provided homosexuals with a false sense of security and acceptance and worked against gays and lesbians becoming politically active in liberationist organizations. Without the development of a politically aware gay identity, gays and lesbians, they argued, would not develop the public visibility and commitment to public political activism necessary for a viable and effective political movement (see for example, Brewster, *Body Politic*, 1972, 4, p. 3; Jackson, *Body Politic*, 1975, 17, p. 9; Popert, *Body Politic*, 1979, 52, p. 8).

Several new gay organizations were established in the late 1970s to deal specifically with the growing number of confrontations between gays and the Toronto Metro Police Force. The most important and public of these was the Right to Privacy Committee (RTPC) constituted after the Barracks Bathhouse raids in 1978 to fund and direct the defence of the bathhouse owners and 'found-ins'. The RTPC continued to speak on behalf of the gay community on a number of issues until well into the 1980s. The Toronto Chapter of the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), in existence since 1973, also became a much more visible and vocal presence in gay movement politics in the late 1970s under the leadership of its more militant pastor, the Reverend Brent Hawkes. Finally, the growing number of gay businesses in the gay ghetto meant that gay businessmen constituted an increasingly visible faction in gay movement politics. Raids on gay bars and bathhouses meant that liberationists were put in the position of defending the very spaces they had previously condemned. Not surprisingly, the proliferation of

gay organizations with gay business involvement meant tensions between liberationists and gay business owners over both ideology and strategy grew increasingly volatile by the late 1970s.

The *News and Views* circumstances are important because they illustrate how, in the process of responding to and participating in the public debates over such things as the *News and Views* articles, liberationist activists began to assert that collectively gay and lesbian identity constituted a quasi-ethnic minority and that same-sex behaviour constituted an essential and inherent attribute of the self. This was to radically alter not only the movement's perspective on gay and lesbian identity but transform their conceptualization of the meanings associated with Toronto's commercial and residential gay ghetto.

Gay Activists and Public Speech: legitimacy and minority status

Across North America in the 1970s and 1980s, there was increasing concern over how police forces operated in the increasingly diverse neighbourhoods developing in major urban areas. A number of studies in Canada and the United States expressed concern that police bureaucracies were becoming socially isolated and organizationally rigid (Grant, 1980; Shearing, 1981; Hogarth, 1982). The move towards so-called community policing was well under way in the United States by the mid-1970s and in Canada, there were increasing calls for Canadian police forces, including the Toronto Police, to develop closer and more direct ties with local community groups and community leaders. The racist Peglar article put the question of Toronto police relations with Toronto's growing number of immigrant communities into the spotlight and its publication concurrently with the equally derogatory Moclair article on homosexuals provided an opportunity to draw parallels between the experiences of ethnic minority communities and gays and lesbians.

Public response to both *News and Views* articles was swift and critical. *Globe and Mail* columnist Dick Beddoes called the articles a 'hateful smear of hate' and demanded on behalf of all 'right-thinking citizens' that apologies be made by the police and the officers involved (*Globe*, 21 March, 1979, p. 8). The first public meeting was organized by the newly formed, left-leaning municipal party, ReforMetro on March 26, 1979. The meeting was attended by over 300 people from a diverse number of groups including members of the RTPC, the MCC, the Canadian-Arab Friendship Society, the International Committee against Racism, the Canadian Jewish Congress, B'nai Brith and local gay activists. It should be noted that although individual lesbians and lesbian groups voiced objections to the Moclair articles, gay activists dominated the public proceedings under discussions here. These groups would press the police and local and provincial politicians to come to grips with what was framed as a question of 'police-minority relations'. Those present passed a unanimous resolution calling for the resignation of all police officers who utter or publish bigoted or racist views. The group demanded an apology from the Police Association to all minority groups and a public inquiry into racism and police attitudes towards homosexuals (Beddoes, *Globe*, 21 March, 1979; *BP*, May 1979; Christie, 27 March, 1979b; *Star*, 28 March, 1979; *Star*, 29 March, 1979)⁸. With the issue defined as a question of proper 'police-minority relations', the determination of what groups constituted a legitimate 'minority' became crucial. Between March and August 1979, various organizations pressed the issue before the Toronto Police Commission, the City of

Toronto Municipal Council, the Metropolitan Municipal Council and the Provincial Police Commission. As events unfolded, three main perspectives dominated mainstream discourses and served to distinguish between homosexuals and what came to be described as legitimate minority groups. First, those mainstream discourses sympathetic to discrimination against homosexuals almost always referred to homosexuals and minority groups as separate and distinct entities and rarely labelled homosexuals as a minority. Secondly, discrimination against homosexuals was represented predominantly as something experienced by individual gays and lesbians and not something experienced by gays and lesbians collectively. Concurrently, mainstream discourses seldom represented homosexuals as constituting a 'community' or as having any collective commonality. This included making reference to 'gay activists', on one hand, and to 'community leaders' of various ethnic groups on the other hand. Finally, organizations such as the Police Commission deliberately avoided acknowledging 'sexual orientation' as a separate and distinct ground for discrimination. This stemmed in part from a desire to avoid giving the term legitimacy and recognition that to do so would lend credence to the gay movement arguments that gays and lesbians needed protection under the province's human rights legislation.

From the outset, Toronto's two major newspapers, the *Toronto Star* and the *Toronto Sun*, and the nationally distributed *Globe and Mail*, clearly distinguished between homosexuals and other minority groups. The *Globe*, while treating the Moclair and Peglar articles as equally reprehensible, in a March 21 1979 editorial carefully distinguished between police relations with homosexuals and police relations with ethnic minorities. The *Globe* specifically condemned police misconduct towards individual homosexuals as reprehensible, but went on to discuss at length the need for improved police relationships with ethnic minority communities. The *Globe* asserted, for example, that the overtly racist Peglar article demonstrated the need to investigate police officers' 'attitudes towards minorities' while arguing that individual homosexuals should expect to be treated fairly by police (p. 6). The *Toronto Star* took a similar tack, deploring police misconduct on one hand while clearly distinguishing between racist comments that could be seen as directed at an entire minority group and discriminatory comments that might be directed at individual homosexuals (*Star*, 29 March, 1979, p. A8).

In his 28 March 1979 column, *Toronto Sun* writer Claire Hoy, a long-time opponent of Toronto's gay movement, took the more extreme view and framed the issue as a question of freedom of the press and freedom of expression. Hoy claimed Officer Moclair had a right to express his personal opinion and that, while the officer's choice of words might have been unwise, he was 'generally perceptive in his conclusions' (p. 8). In its main editorial the next day, the *Sun* echoed Hoy's arguments, bemoaning the fact that newspapers such as *News and Views* seemed to be losing their freedom of expression when it came to discussing homosexuals. The *Sun*, by implication, was not prepared to concede that anti-homosexual comments were wrong or represented anything more than legitimate expressions of personal opinion (*Toronto Sun*, 29 March, 1979, p. 10).

The 'Working Group on Police-minority Relations', established during the public meeting organized by ReforMetro in March 1979, was under the leadership of gay activists from RTPC and MCC and initially focused all its attention on the Moclair article, arguing that in *News and Views* articles, 'the gay community took

the brunt of the attack'. Although gay liberationists deplored the Peglar article's racist content, their public condemnations focused almost exclusively on gay concerns and made little effort to draw possible connections between the discrimination suffered by gays and lesbians with other minority groups nor did they overtly represent gays and lesbians as constituting a 'minority' group (i.e. *BP*, 1979, May, p. 8).

Leaders of the various ethnic minority community groups took a similar approach; ignoring the homosexual issue in favour of an exclusive focus on the issues raised by the discriminatory comments in the Peglar article. At the various public meetings, ethnic minority leaders and gay activists addressed the concerns of their respective constituents separately with little analysis of or belief in the commonality of experience among groups at the hands of the police. Despite the appearance of working together, mainstream and gay press reporting suggests that there was little real cohesion between ethnic minority groups and the gay movement (*Star*, 28 and 29 March, 1979; *Globe*, 1979, 21 March; *BP*, 1979, May).

The Working Group initially demanded that Toronto's Police Chief, Harold Adamson, apologize for the *News and Views* articles. Adamson originally refused to comment on the *News and Views* articles, claiming it was a Police Association publication and not within his jurisdiction. However, mainstream newspaper editorials, politicians and community groups that demanded the Chief respond to the implication that the *News and Views* articles reflected the opinion of a substantial number of his police officers. Some nine days after the articles became public, Adamson apologized to both 'homosexuals and minority groups' for the views expressed in the publication and stressed that these were not the opinions of the force as a whole (Christie, *Star*, 20 March 1979a; *Globe*, 21 March 1979; Thomas, *Star*, 21 March 1979; *Star*, 28 March 1979; Harvey, *Sun*, 29 March 1979).

Not satisfied with the police force's apologies, the Working Group brought the matter to the municipal council for the City of Toronto on April 2, 1979. The Group lobbied City Council to pass a resolution demanding clarification of the Police Force's views on racism and discrimination against homosexuals (*Globe*, 5 April 1979, p. 6; *BP*, 1979 May). The City of Toronto was generally supportive of gay and lesbian issues, having added 'sexual orientation' as a prohibited grounds of discrimination in municipal employment in 1973 (*BP*, 1973, Winter). After hearing submissions from a number of community groups including representations on behalf of gays and lesbians, Toronto's City Council passed a resolution calling on the Metropolitan Police Commission to clearly state the Commission's attitudes towards racism and sexual orientation. In language that clearly represented gays and lesbians as constituting a legitimate 'minority', the City Council resolution also demanded the recruitment of more police officers 'from minority groups, including gays and lesbians' (*BP*, 1979, May).

Mainstream opinion was again clearly divided over whether further action needed to be taken against the police given the apology by the police Chief and the strongly worded municipal resolution. *Globe* Columnist Dick Beddoes argued that both the police apology and the City Council resolution were a 'wrist-tap kind of reply' and demanded that more concrete action be taken to reassure minority groups, including homosexuals, that discriminatory police practices would be addressed (*Globe*, 28 March 1979). In its main editorial, the *Globe* called the City's resolution clear proof of the City's intention to 'show bigotry the door' (*Globe*, 5 April 1979). For its part, the *Toronto Star* claimed the apologies from both the police chief and the police association 'cleared the air' and that the incident should be

laid to rest (*Star*, 29 March 1979, p. A8). Despite calls from some quarters to move on to more important concerns, the April 2 City Council resolution was put on the agenda for consideration at the next level of government, the Metropolitan Toronto Council.

The City of Toronto resolution appeared clear and unequivocal in its call for the Police Commission to address discrimination by police against homosexuals and ethnic minority groups. The Metropolitan Toronto Council was considerably more reluctant to support the former's issues and expressed serious reservations about the apparent criticism of Toronto's police force. Metro Council, made up of suburban and semi-rural wards as well as the city of Toronto wards, was generally a more conservative council and was chaired by Phil Givens, an appointee to the Police Commission. On 19 June, activists submitted the 2 April Toronto City Council resolutions to Metro Council for approval. After a long and acrimonious debate, Metro Council narrowly voted, 17 to 14, to ask the Metro Board of Police Commissioners to oppose police discrimination against homosexuals (Baker, *Globe*, 20 June 1979; Conway, *Star*, 20 June 1979). Metro Council also concurred with the City of Toronto resolution calling on the Police Commission to amend its bylaws to prevent police officers from telling third parties about an accused's sexual orientation (*Star*, 28 June 1979).

From the outset, the Metropolitan Toronto Police Commission, the agency charged with overseeing the administration of Toronto's police force, refused to expressly condemn discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation despite being pressed to do so by a number of individuals and groups including Toronto's Mayor John Sewell, the Executive Director of National Joint Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress, B'nai Brith and the Working Group on Police Minority relations. The Commission, in their first meeting on the *News and Views* articles in April 1979, stated publicly that they were 'firmly against bigotry and the exercise of prejudice in any form' [*Body Politic*, 1979, 53 (June), p. 13]. When asked to expressly condemn discrimination based on sexual orientation they refused, saying their general statement was sufficient (Jefferson, *Globe*, 6 April 1979).

By the June meeting of the Police Commission, both the City of Toronto and Metro council resolutions had passed resolutions expressly requesting that the Commission clearly state its opposition to police discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. After a lengthy and hostile public meeting on 28 June, the Commission increased tensions by ignoring almost all submissions from gay and lesbian and ethnic minority leaders, as well as the resolutions of both the City and Metro councils. After listening without comment to over three hours of public presentations, the Commission passed what seemed to most present to be a previously prepared resolution merely reaffirming the Commission's direction to the police to prohibit discrimination in hiring, promotions or dealings with the public (*BP*, 1979, June; Palango, *Globe*, 29 June 1979). The resolution again stated that the Commission was opposed to bigotry and the exercise of prejudice in any form and the Commission again expressly refused to refer to sexual orientation as prohibited grounds of discrimination. Not surprisingly, the Commission voted against the establishment of a civilian review board although they did agree to amend their bylaws to prohibit police from relaying information to third parties on criminal charges; a position already agreed to by the Police Chief in January 1979.

The Metro Police Commission's decision was promptly appealed to the Ontario Police Commission, the final arbiter on matters pertaining to police conduct in

the province of Ontario. Despite receiving numerous written submissions and listening to a number of presentations on the difficulties gays, lesbians and others had with Toronto's police, the Ontario Commission, upheld the Metropolitan Police Commission's resolution to oppose discrimination of any kind and in a report dated 26 July 1979 argued that such a general prohibition was sufficient. Without other grounds on which to appeal the Ontario Commission's findings to the courts, no further action could be taken. Mainstream interest in the issue had waned and little concern was expressed over the Ontario Commission's failure to overturn the decision of the local commission (*Globe*, 28 July 1979). The gay press called the findings a 'rubber stamp' and pressed for further action although none was forthcoming (Lewis, *BP*, 1979, August; *BP*, 1979, September).

To this point, gay activists and the gay media had merely paid only modest attention to ethnic minority concerns over police conduct and had focused almost solely on gay activists' concerns about police conduct. The RTPC and MCC did not use a 'minority' representation of gays and lesbians in their public presentations nor did they take exception to dominant mainstream discourses that deliberately distinguishing between gays and lesbians and (ethnic) minorities. Concurrently, ethnic minority activists and community leaders represented the concerns of their constituencies without drawing any meaningful parallels between their problems with the police and those of the gay population. Although the city of Toronto and Metro Councils were prepared to press the Police Force to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation, the Police Commission and the Police Force itself deliberately avoided using any language that referred to sexual orientation. The need to position gays and lesbians as a legitimate minority and to forge alliances with other minority groups would not become an explicit requirement of legitimacy to participate in public discourses on police-minority relations until the shooting death of Albert Johnson in August, 1979.

The Death of Albert Johnson: on the outside looking in

With the decision of the Ontario Police Commission, matters reached a stalemate. The issue might have faded away but for the fatal shooting of Jamaican-born Albert Johnson in the front hall of his own home on 26 August 1979. Johnson, who lived with his wife and four children in a downtown lower-middle class neighbourhood, was killed by Toronto Police officers responding to a call about someone acting in 'an abusive and disorderly manner' (Mironowicz & Lavigne, *Globe*, 27 August 1979, p. 1). Accusations of racism and excessive use of force by the police were quick to follow.

Although the mainstream press and the police initially treated the Johnson shooting as an isolated incident, the black community and other communities of colour saw the shooting as racially motivated. Public pressure forced the Toronto Police to turn the investigation of the shooting over to the Ontario Provincial Police, renewing concerns over the lack of an independent, civilian review process (Lavigne, *Globe*, 30 August 1979a; Blatchford, *Star*, 28 August 1979; *Star*, 28 August 1979). By mid-September, provincial Attorney General Roy McMurtry bowed to public pressure and announced the creation of an independent civilian review board, a serious blow to the credibility of Metropolitan Toronto's Police Commission. Toronto's city council also passed a motion of non-confidence in the Commission on 18 September 1979 (*Globe*, 28 and 29 August 1979; Christie, *Star*, 18 September 1979c; Ferry, *Globe*, 18 September 1979).

With the question of police conduct back in the public spotlight, gay activists found themselves excluded from the public discussions over what was again framed as 'police-minority' relations. Despite the high profile of gay issues over the previous months, the mainstream press and minority community leaders did not refer to gays and lesbians or their communities in public commentary over the Johnson shooting and what was represented as continuing police misconduct against minorities.

Gay activists realized that in order to participate in these public debates, they needed to connect their concerns over police misconduct with those of other minority groups. Throughout the fall of 1979 the liberationist magazine, the *Body Politic*, printed a series of editorials and articles that worked hard to forge connections between gays and lesbians and other minority groups. In so doing the *Body Politic*, for the first time, deliberately constituted gays and lesbians as a minority group with interests in common with ethnic and racial groups. In its October 1979 editorial entitled 'Black power, pink triangles', the *Body Politic* called the Johnson killing the 'latest in a series of incidents involving racism and homophobia' and asserted that the 'demonstrated unwillingness of Metro Police Commission to implement any of the proposals from gay activists as proof that the Commission was unwilling or unable to stem police violence against minorities' (p. 7). The *Body Politic* also argued that the 'continuing crisis in police-minority relations that began with the *News and Views* article, reached a new intensity with shooting of Johnson' (p. 7). While noting that the relationship between some minorities and gays was 'uneasy' at best, the *Body Politic* urged gays and lesbians to support black community protests and demonstrations.

This 'uneasiness' between ethnically designated and gay and lesbian communities became more readily apparent during the 14 October 1979 anti-racism rally held at Toronto's City Hall. Ethnic groups community leaders who had studiously avoided making any connections with gay activists during the *News and Views* proceedings now made it very clear they did not consider gays and lesbians as legitimate minority groups with concerns similar to their own. Initial opposition to a gay and lesbian presence at the anti-racism rally came at organizational meeting for an anti-racism rally when the Canadian Party of Labour and Sikh leaders expressed reservations about MCC Pastor Brent Hawkes speaking on behalf of the Working Group on Police-Minority Relations. At the 14 October rally itself the original objectors intervened again, reportedly pressing Hawkes to tone down the parts of his speech dealing with gay and lesbian issues (Trow, *BP*, 1979a October, 1979, November; TBP, *Newsbreak*, 12 October 1979). Despite Hawkes' appearance as a representative of the Working Group on Police-Minority Relations, the mainstream press made no mention of Hawkes' presence at rally or the presence of several hundred gay participants in a crowd of just over 1,000 people (Mcateer, *Star*, 15 October 1979; *Globe*, 15 October 1979).

The need to assert that gays and lesbians constituted a legitimate minority in order to participate in public debates became abundantly clear with the appointment of Cardinal Carter, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Toronto, to conduct an inquiry into police-minority relations. The Metropolitan Toronto Police Commission, in an attempt to diffuse tensions, appointed Cardinal Carter in September 1979 to meet with community leaders and to make recommendations on improving relations between the police and various community groups (Harpur, *Star*, 30 October 1979).

Nowhere is the intent to deny that gays and lesbians constituted either a 'community' or a 'minority' more clearly illustrated than the careful and

deliberate wording of the report submitted by Cardinal Carter on 19 October 1979. Carter's report clearly denies homosexuals any collective identity, stating that, in his judgment, 'they do not... constitute a community which may legitimately demand special consideration'. (Carter Report, 1979 at 8). Carter bluntly distinguished between 'homosexuals and visible minorities' and reinforced the difference by using the word 'racism' rather than 'discrimination' or 'bigotry' throughout his report in what gay activists saw as a malicious attempt to exclude homosexuals from its ambit (Trow, 1979/1980; *BP*, December-January). Carter carefully worded his recommendations as well, calling for better police education and training about racial issues, recruitment of visible minorities and the creation of a police-visible minority community liaison.

The mainstream press provided extensive coverage of the contents of the Carter report with several papers doing full-page stories. All three mainstream papers praised the report as fair and thorough and local politicians, the Police Commission and the Police Force spokesmen supported the immediate implementation of the recommendations (Blatchford, *Star*, 30 October 1979; Christie, *Star*, 29 October 1979d). In a 30 October editorial, the *Toronto Star* called Carter's report 'hard-hitting' and praised Carter's recommendations. The editorial makes a passing reference to Carter's comments on police conduct around homosexuals but was precise in making a distinction between the experiences of individual homosexuals and members of minority groups (*Star*, 1979, p. A10). Even *Globe* columnist Dick Beddoes, usually a strong proponent of gay and lesbian issues, failed to mention the obvious exclusion of homosexuals from the heart of Carter's recommendations. Then next day the *Globe's* main editorial described the Carter report as a 'report on race relations' and urged immediate implementation of Carter's recommendations without amendment (*Globe*, 31 October 1979, p. 6).

Not surprisingly, gay activists, MCC, the RTPC and the Working Group objected vigorously both to Carter's initial appointment and to the phrasing of the final report. In criticizing Carter's selection as an intermediary, the *Body Politic*, in a September 1979 editorial pointed out that it was 'ridiculous to think that a senior official of an institution firmly on record as opposing the most basic human rights for gay people' could possibly be expected to report fairly on police-gay relations (p. 9). Gay activists objected to the use of the term 'visible' minorities in Carter's report, arguing that it ensured that the applicability of the report's commentary or recommendations to the gay community was ambiguous at best. Activists were also angered that Carter ignored the long list of grievances over police conduct against the gay community submitted during gay activists' meetings with him.

The Metro Police Commission quickly passed all the Carter recommendations on 1 November 1979 (Logan, *Globe*, 2 November 1979). According to the *Body Politic*, only aggressive intervention by gay activists ensured that the wording was inclusive enough to address gay and lesbian issues. In condemning the use of racist epithets by police officers, gay spokesmen insisted that the term 'racist' be replaced with the term 'discriminatory' to cover homophobic comments as well. The Commission also refused to clarify whether the recommendation to establish a police liaison committee with 'visible minorities' included gays as well. After considerable pressure from the Working Group on Police-Minority relations, the Commission finally stated that the term included 'all minorities' (Trow, 1979c; *BP*, November). From that point forward, various forms of the police-minority or community relations committees in Toronto included representatives from local gay and lesbian organizations.

The minority representation of gay and lesbian identity and space was firmly in place by the early 1980s and is illustrated in a February 1980 article in the *Body Politic*. In that article, long-time activists Chris Bearchell and Ed Jackson maintain that gays and lesbians cannot be assimilated into mainstream society because, as homosexuals, they will 'go on seeing and interpreting things filtered through our experience as gay people' (Bearchell & Jackson, *BP*, 1980 February). For Bearchell and Jackson, the common experience of same-sex desire represents a core aspect of gays' and lesbians' character and this collective, experiential referent operates as a unifying force in the constitution of a minority identity. The authors argue that gay spaces were essential, rather than detrimental, to the formation of individual and collective gay and lesbian identities and that the gay ghetto would have to expand, rather than disappear, to meet the increasing demand for establishments 'catering to our special needs' (p. 24). In their view, these places did not constitute the worrisome 'insular ghetto' of past experience, but were necessary to formation of a strong and coherent gay and lesbian identity and community. In fact, Toronto's gay neighbourhoods, they argued, should be celebrated as the location 'where our community of desire becomes a territorial one, a genuine "gay ghetto" in all the good and bad meanings of the term'. By the early 1980s, the gay ghetto had come to delineate a legitimate space, one that was necessary for the formation and wellbeing of a distinct and cohesive gay and lesbian minority group and one that validated an ethnic minority politic.

Conclusions

The history of the gay and lesbian movements in Toronto between the late 1960s and the early 1980s is one in which the identity of people engaged in same-sex activities was a hotly contested and volatile subject. Within a feminist poststructuralist analytical framework, it is possible to highlight those dominant discursive representations of both gay and lesbian identities in circulation at any one time and to flesh out, from a geographical perspective, how those discursive formulations were embedded in and inscribed meanings onto the material spaces associated with same-sex activities. Put another way, the emergence of new identities is a discursive event in which individuals, through their choice of actions and behaviours, bring about the constitution of new but unstable and constantly reforming identities and spaces (Scott, 1993; Nash, 2003). More importantly, it is possible to trace some of the processes through which transformations in constitutions of identities and spaces take place resulting, intentionally or otherwise, in a reconstitution, rewriting or reversal of the dominant meanings associated with same-sex behaviour.

The confrontation between gay organizations, minority groups and the police over the *News and Views* articles and the death of Albert Johnson was only one in a series of overlapping incidents in which gay activists moved away from a liberationist politic in favour of a portrayal of the gay (and lesbian) community as a minority group. The liberationist human rights agenda had already begun to undermine representations of sexual and gendered identities as fluid and malleable given the legislative context and the forums in which human rights concerns were debated. Far from being a well-thought-out and deliberate strategic shift in gay movement ideology, the move towards a minority framework by Toronto's gay organizations came about as a result of a series of pragmatic, grass roots decisions having an unexpected yet transformative impact on political ideologies. As sexual orientation increasingly came to be seen as an inherent and

fixed characteristic of identity and as an experience constituting a collective sense of identity and community, new meanings about the spaces associated with same-sex activities came into being. In the end, for better or for worse, the Toronto's gay ghetto had become a symbolic centre of gay life and gay politics in the Canadian landscape.

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Notes

1. Tom Moclair, The homosexual fad, *News and Views*, March 1979, pp. 10–11; Ken Peglar, Pensioners news, *News and Views*, March 1979, pp. 13–14 (Toronto, City of Toronto Archives).
2. The words 'gay', 'lesbian' and 'homosexual' designate concepts that are associated with particular social categories of identity seen as culturally and historically variable. In this article, I use the term 'gay' to refer to men engaged in same-sex activities and the term 'lesbian' to refer to women engaged in same-sex activities. While gay and lesbian organization during this period referred to their constituents as 'gays and lesbians', the mainstream interests predominantly used the term 'homosexual' in their commentary.
3. The 1969 Criminal Code amendments were considered only a 'partial' legalization of same-sex conduct because the amendment continued to define same-sex activities as 'grossly indecent' but exempted such activities from criminal sanction if conducted 'in private', between no more than two persons, neither of whom was under 21 years of age (Kinsman, 1996).
4. The term 'ethnic minorities' is employed here in the same unproblematic usage found in public accounts of the period. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, local minority populations in Toronto were beginning to organize around seemingly straightforward representations of 'black' or 'Sikh' identities which were taken up without comment in mainstream commentary. Academic and social critique of these notions of 'minority' identities, 'ethnicity' and 'race' were yet to come.
5. Although there is some research on emerging lesbian-identified spaces of the late 1980s and early 1990s, there is little agreement on why a more significant number of lesbians did not locate in gay male districts or on why lesbians have not created their own districts to the same extent or in the same way as gay men. Research suggest that lesbians, as women, are less inclined to be territorial, and have had limited access to the financial and political resources necessary to establish residential and commercial districts (Lauria & Knopp, 1985; Adler & Brenner, 1992; Valentine, 1993a, b; Peake, 1994; Rothenberg, 1995; Bouthillette, 1997; Nash, 2001; Podmore, 2001).
6. It was not until the early 1990s that there was increasing academic interest in the formation of distinct and separate lesbian residential districts and in the distinctive ways lesbians utilized urban spaces (Adler & Brenner, 1992; Peake, 1994; Rothenberg, 1995; Bouthillette, 1997; Nash, 2001; Podmore, 2001).
7. The term 'homophile' was used by the early assimilationist organizations in both Canada and the United States as a way to deflect attention from the sexual aspect of homosexuality and to suggest that the movement could include heterosexuals who were sympathetic to the homosexual cause (Kinsman, 1996; Escoffier, 1998).

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ABSTRACT TRANSLATION

Identidad en Conflicto: políticas de gays y lesbianas en Toronto en los años 1970

RESUMEN Este artículo explora un momento particular en la historia de las políticas del movimiento de los gays de Toronto cuando sus perspectivas

ideológicas sobre la naturaleza de identidades gay y lesbiana y sus espacios respectivos cambiaron dramáticamente, desde la llamada 'perceptiva liberacionista' de los mediados de los años setenta hasta la llamada 'perspectiva de las minorías étnica' de los últimos años de los setentas. Este cambio ocurrió dentro del contexto de una serie particular de eventos que incitaron a los activistas gay a revisar sus conceptualizaciones sobre su identidad gay y lesbiana con el fin de ser reconocidos como participantes legítimos en ciertos procesos públicos. Lejos de ser un cambio bien planeado y deliberado en la estrategia política, el argumento de la 'minoría' consistía, de varias maneras, en una respuesta no reflexiva no examinada a circunstancias inesperadas. Los activistas gay de Toronto, al representar a los gays y lesbianas como minorías, alteraron de manera fundamental los significados asociados tanto a las identidades de gays y lesbianas como los espacios dominados o controlados por intereses de gays y lesbianas.

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